

Mississippi Forestry Commission

State Safety Council

Southwest District-Brookhaven, MS

July 19, 2007

State Safety Council Members:

Bob Ponder, Chairman	State Office
Steven Williams, Past-Chairman	Southwest
Greg Chatham, Secretary	South Central
George Byrd	Northwest
Robert Gill	South Central
Todd Matthews	Southeast
Bob Ponder	State Office
Philip Wilson	Waynesboro Nursery
Roger Wood	Southeast
Michael Sherman	South Central
Dwight Arbuckle	Northeast
John Walker, S/T Officer	SRFTC
Dale Brown	Southwest
Jan Baker	State Office
Jeff Ware	Northeast

Guests: None

Absent:

Ed Brown	South Central
Danny Moore	EMS
Greg Bourque	Radio Shop
Craig Oswalt	Northeast

Stephen Williams welcomed all the State Safety Council (SSC) members to the Southwest District in Brookhaven, MS. Mr. Williams coordinated our lunch selections and he informed us of some housekeeping topics to help familiarize the SSC members with the district's facilities. Chairman Williams called the meeting to order at 10:00 a. m. He introduced a possible change to the new fiscal year Chairman office position. The idea was suggested that it should be a **field personnel** employee and not a **State Office** employee. Mr. Ponder is serving as Vice-Chairman and is scheduled for the Chairman office for FY 2008. However, after some discussion by the SSC members the council felt that Mr. Ponder would do a fine job as Chairman, although he is not a **field personnel** employee. **Congratulations to Mr. Ponder as Chairman!**

Before Mr. Williams leaves his post as Chairman a new FY 2008 Secretary must be filled. Mr. Williams asked for nominations to fill the vacant Secretary position held presently by George Byrd who is moving to the Vice-Chairman office for FY 2008. A motion was made by one of the SSC members to nominate Greg Chatham, Forest Tech I, Lauderdale County for the position of Secretary for FY 2008. Jan Baker seconded it. There was favorable discussion by the SSC members regarding Mr. Chatham's nomination. Therefore, no new nominations for Secretary were added and a motion was made to close the nominations for the Secretary position. Mr. Williams called for a vote for Greg Chatham to serve 2007-2008 as State Safety Council Secretary. It was a unanimous vote "all in favor" of Mr. Chatham as the new FY 2008 SSC Secretary.

Finally, FY 2008 State Safety Council Chairman, Bob Ponder called the meeting to order at 10:15 a. m. Chairman Ponder again welcomed all the State Safety Council members to the meeting and thanked Stephen Williams and Dale Brown for hosting the meeting at the Southwest District. The SSC members also thanked Stephen Williams for his excellent leadership as Chairman of the State Safety Council during FY 2007. The State Safety Council decided the next SSC meeting will be **Thursday, November 8, 2007 at 10:00 a.m.** in the Northeast District in Tupelo, MS. A specific location of the SSC meeting will be announced at a later date and Jeff Ware will notify the SSC members.

Mr. Ponder asked each SSC member to take the opportunity to read the minutes from the last State Safety Council meeting on May 1, 2007. There were no corrections to be made to the May 1st SSC minutes. Greg Chatham made a motion to accept the minutes as reviewed and Dwight Arbuckle second the motion followed with a unanimous vote by the council members.

Old Business:

The following items were reviewed again from the May 1, 2007 meeting:

John Walker informed the SSC members that MFC pilots are making regular safety inspections on all MFC aircraft at (50 hours) oil change and (100 hours) detailed safety review based on FFA guidelines. If district Safety Coordinators need assistance for "Safety Inspections" at county work-centers the pilots are available (F-20, 21, 22 MFC Safety Manual). Contact John Walker and he will notify Stan Burke.

The new F350 Pumper trucks need a "spotter" when the vehicle operator is backing the one-ton pumper because of poor visibility. The "spotter" can watch for obstructions. The vehicle operator is encouraged to walk around the MFC vehicle prior to backing. Each MFC vehicle should have a sticker by the cab door handles to remind the operator "**Caution: Walk Around Vehicle Before Backing**". If you need stickers contact John Walker.

Remind the one-ton pumper truck operator there are no fire extinguishers in inside these new trucks. Contact Jon Zimmerman for assistance.
It seems to be a communication problem when new MFC vehicles at the EMS

leave the site to go to the districts without the proper safety items in the trucks. The districts should not have to buy first aid kits and fire extinguishers for the new “Katrina funded” one-ton pumper vehicles.

Philip Wilson informed the SSC members that pine seedlings at Waynesboro Nursery are now 8” tall in the beds. He stated, “We are watching the weather very closely.” In fact, Mr. Wilson stated, “there has been plenty of rainfall this month and the personnel are beginning to top prune the pine seedlings and the pine seedlings sales are good.

Jeff Ware developed a Northeast District “Safety Ladder” which is being modified to cover all three Areas in the NED. **It is a “work in progress”.** However, the big draw back of this safety-tracking plan is the “Safety Incentive Items”. He stated, purchasing items to recognize MFC employees for a good safety record is very important. The Safety Ladder is based on the months the employees are “accident free” in a particular Area. Then the Area would be recognized for its “good safety record”. A suggestion was to make a sticker, “Accident Free” to be placed on the firefighters hard hat or even possibly developing an “Accident Free” logo to go on a T-shirt or a windbreaker jacket.

Jan Baker suggested contacting a business to provide the MFC employees with A “good safety record” a free gift certificate or a free meal. (Solicitation!)

Jeff Ware contacted the MDOT district office in Tupelo, MS and asked a MDOT Employee if they have an employee “good safety record” recognition program.

Robbie Gill suggested a meal approved by the district forester with an agenda for a meeting to recognize those MFC employees with a “good safety record”. However, to hold a special Area Safety meeting with an agenda and to complete a RTP would come out of the district fiscal year budget. Are the district foresters willing to do this?

Bob Ponders stated, “there are no special guidelines or suggestions to get the State law that prohibits gifts or awards to State employees to be changed. It was suggested that a member of the SSC group contact other agencies to determine how many other state agencies handle recognition of their employees for a “good safety record” on the job.

What is a “Recordable Accident”? The 181.5 First Aid report is complete. Is it “chargeable” or is there any “Lost Time” accrued by the injured MFC employee because of the accident on the job? If there is no lost time then it should be classified as a “non-chargeable” accident. Then the MFC employee may be recognized for a “good safety record” possibly by providing the employee with one of the following suggestive safety items as a safety incentive for the field: flashlight, safety gloves, tote bag or back pack, multi-tool, or a flashing strobe light for the cruise vest or helmet.

Bob Ponder and John Walker will be the clearinghouse source for these safety items to be distributed out to the field through the district Safety Coordinator based on the employee's "good safety record".

Bob Ponder established a Safety Incentive Program sub-committee to develop safety incentive item purchasing procedures and guidelines on what will be classified specifically as a "non-chargeable accident" for the "good safety record". Bob Ponder received a motion from Stephen Williams to establish the Safety Incentive Program sub-committee and it was seconded by Todd Matthews. The SIP sub-committee is: Robbie Gill, Stephen Williams, Todd Matthews, Jeff Ware, John Walker, and a NWD representative. This group will report their suggestions to the State Safety Council at the next meeting in November.

John Walker stated the five-year average of Workers Compensation premiums totaled \$275,500/year.

John Walker encourage the district Safety Coordinators to emphasize to the Area & Service Foresters to do the bi-monthly safety meetings or their "tail gate" safety talks on seasonal safety items.

It was suggested that back-up beepers on one-ton pumper vehicles safety idea be given to the Equipment Committee or to the district Protection Foresters for their job to have it included in the future specifications of one-ton pumpers. Roger Wood informed the SSC members that a back-up beeper was installed on a one-ton pumper in their county for \$32.00 total cost. It was suggested that a letter to Mr. Charlie Morgan, State Forester be sent by Bob Ponder, SSC Chairman. Then the LEAD Team can discuss it and act on it, if they wish.

"Ready Kits" for each MFC employee should be in place to be used on fire operation activities. The nomex clothing should be left in the MFC vehicles at all times for emergency situations by each fire unit operator.

Danny Moore was absent to get a report on the availability of tote bags or back packs from surplus property or other sources to store the extra PPE. **The State Safety Council would like to make a recommendation to Mr. Charlie Morgan and the LEAD Team that "Ready Kits" be available to each MFC employee riding in the MFC vehicles while participating in fire operations.**

New Business:

John Walker announced there are plans to have a Prescribed Burning shortcourse on October 15-18 2007 in Hattiesburg, MS.

He also stated the district Safety & Training Coordinators will have a STCG meeting Tuesday August 28 at the SRFTC in Pearl, MS.

Todd Matthews, SED Safety Coordinator discussed a "heat stroke" related

accident while performing boundary line work. It was a diabetic condition that may have increased the accident occurrence. The Governor's Workplace Health-Fitness Program was discussed. There may be work force funding to develop a MFC fitness program that would include a trainer and dietician for nutrition suggestions to each MFC employee. There was some discussion about a "modified pack test" for field personnel. Possibly there may be funds to provide fitness equipment or to pay for a MFC employee to attend a "wellness fitness center". George Byrd suggested that Bobby Edwards, NWD forester be contacted about the NWD fitness program concept and suggestions for implementation with the assistance of an Area Forester (Jon Mark Williams). The SSC members discussed the possibility of a "wellness health center" person be invited to the next SSC meeting to discuss nutrition and fitness to the group. The SSC could then make a recommendation to Mr. Morgan and the LEAD Team regarding a fitness program "Master Plan of Action" for each MFC employee. I believe John Walker suggested to contact the Alabama and Florida Forestry Commission on their fitness program. Also touch base with the US Forest Service district ranger offices in Mississippi on their fitness program.

Are there any work racks or tool boxes on the new D5 tractors and do the tractors have "environmental control" cabs?

There was some discussion of the proper means of wearing nomex pants over the boots and not tuck down inside the boots. Long sleeve shirts are to be worn to prevent insect stings. (C-1 MFC Safety Manual)

How do rechargeable flashlights do in the field compared to battery powered flashlights? There is some concern about night fires when using flashlights with batteries were discussed and the MFC employee uses too many batteries over a period of time.

Lunch 12:25 p. m.

Philip Wilson asked about the need for CPR/First Aid training at the nursery. He was informed of the different methods of having this course taught to his nursery personnel. NWD used workforce funding through the community college and a paramedic taught all of the district employees from (21) counties in seven sessions.

John Walker distributed the FY 2007 MFC Statewide Accident Summary sheets to the SSC members for review and comments on how the (46) accidents could have been prevented. This fiscal year had a high number of vehicle accidents (19) and there were (27) personal injuries reported. Also Mr. Walker distributed the latest FARA Workers Compensation "Active Claims" report from 2000-present to SSC members for review.

John Walker informed the SSC members that Safety forms are on the Intranet

and there is an updated Safety Page. Lisa Harris is doing a great job. The State Safety Council minutes can be placed on the MFC web site. Each district Safety Coordinator needs to look at the Safety Checklist on (F-20) of the MFC Safety Manual.

Greg Chatham stated there are some problems with new transport ramps. A hydraulic line failed and both ramps fell. It was suggested that a check valve be added to relief any pressure. It was suggested to be away from the transport ramps at least a minimum of 25 feet to be safe.

Steven Williams asked if a surplus bag been found for the "Ready Kits" for every person. The new fire shelters cost \$288.00. It is important to develop a "gear bag" for each MFC employee on a MFC vehicle. The new Sterling transports without tractors on the beds are bad about "bouncing" on the roads. He stated the "environmental cab" tractors are safer to stay inside during a wildfire blow over.

It was suggested the new Sterling transports be road tested by the district Protection Forester before it goes to a county.

Dale Brown informed the SSC members of a "Mechanic Alert" for the new one ton fire pumpers to inspect the bed bolts. They could be loose or break.

George Byrd suggested that a checklist of all PPE when issued to a MFC employee be signed off by the employee and supervisor. Many employees are stating that they never received any safety gear or they keep coming back for additional safety items (very costly). They are not being good stewards. Jeff Ware stated he had a "PPE checklist" he could e-mail me. A small red or white strobe light to be placed on a vest, shirt, jacket, or helmet on night fires.

Jeff Ware stated there is a need for a radio holster strap to prevent the radio from falling out on to the ground and become damaged or lost in the field.

Dwight Arbuckle was concerned about the headlights on JD 450H tractors are Halogen lamps. This provides good coverage better than the 400 G and 450 G Tractor headlights.

Robbie Gill suggested the one-ton fire pumpers have additional items on them to improve their specifications for better firefighting capabilities
Radios with Benedix King (20) will be kept in a cache for a Southeast Compact fire detail next time.

Ignition switch keys are expensive for a second set of keys (\$280.00).
Encourage to purchase covers for pumps on the new pumpers.

There is a need for reflective tape spelling "MFC" on the back of the nomex clothing.

Bob Ponder encouraged all the district Safety coordinators to make sure the MFC employees are using insect repellent to help reduce the threat of the West Nile virus.

The State Safety Council meeting was adjourned by Chairman Ponder. Again the next SSC meeting will be **Thursday, November 8, 2007 at 10:00 a.m.** at the Northeast District office in Tupelo, MS. It will be held at Tombigbee State Park east of Tupelo, MS. Jeff Ware sent an e-mail August 1 to the SSC members.